

# Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board Inaugural Meeting

**Wednesday, 1 September 2021, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**East Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building, 1111 E. Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia**

## Agenda

*1:03 p.m. Meeting called to order by Secretary Thomasson*

- Opening Remarks
- Introductions of Board members, staff, and guests
- Meeting Overview and Adoption of Agenda
  - Agenda unanimously adopted with one amendment.
  - Amanda Goehring was identified as the meeting recorder.
- Orientation Review
  - Suzanne Holland reviewed main points from the Board Orientation held the previous day.
- Intimate Conversation with Virginia Advisory Board Member Justin Lo
  - Justin Lo, member of the Virginia Asian American Advisory Board and Chair of the Civic Engagement Committee, shared his experience serving on an Advisory Board and answered questions from Board members about initiatives the Asian American Advisory Board had undertaken, including a Stakeholder Database to identify organizations serving the AAPI community and language access in elections.
  - Mr. Lo shared that board service is a great opportunity to connect with people in the community making an impact. One's position as a Board member can open doors to meaningful conversations that may not happen without that status. It is important to communicate to the stakeholders in the community and to increase the reputation of and trust in the Board. Listening to the community, whether informally, through the news, or by inviting speakers to Board or committee meetings is the best way to identify timely issues for the Board to work on.
  - Once the gaps are identified, staff can help make introductions to people in government who could provide insight or expertise. People from other communities facing analogous issues, people in judicial service, and members or other Advisory Boards can also have good perspectives on issues.
  - Work with the Board Chair to look for opportunities to tackle issues. Anyone can make suggestions and take the lead on initiatives. In addition to the Annual Report, the Board can pen op-eds, write letters in support of or opposition to legislation, organize panel discussions or summits, etc. Once the first Annual Report is produced, it can serve as a jumping off point for initiatives in subsequent years developing and advancing those recommendations.

- Ex-Officio Member Meet & Greet

- The Honorable Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth, and the Honorable Daniel Carey, Secretary of Health & Human Resources, spoke with the Board about how Advisory Boards work with Virginia's Departments and Agencies. Secretary Carey highlighted the inclusivity and accomplishments of the Health Equity Working Group.
- Secretary Carey explained Virginia's partnership with Unite Us to create a platform to coordinate health care and social services in one place. In response to a question by Ms. BruMar about whether 911, police, and EMS would also have access to the Unite Virginia platform, Secretary Carey said he was not sure about 911 or police, but that medical care such as mobile crisis units should be included.
- Mx. Mason shared findings from research they had conducted over the past 18 months about healthcare discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ people, particularly that respondents overwhelmingly said they avoided seeking care including testing for COVID-19, and made the point that such discrimination was not only affecting individual's health but also public health. Sec. Carey agreed that professional education for all healthcare and health administration professionals was key to earning and building trust with communities that have historically experienced healthcare discrimination, but he was not aware of any surveys specifically on discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health is currently working on a statewide mental health assessment of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Mr. Han asked about inclusivity with the upcoming state-based health insurance marketplace. Secretary Carey agreed that it will be important to do targeted outreach and that they would partner with vendors with a proven track record of being able to do such outreach. Mr. Han asserted that the language on the application must also be inclusive and that people must feel that their personal information will be protected. Secretary Carey also wondered if forms at the Department of Social Services could have more inclusive language.
- Mr. Keeling observed by analogy to the Cut-Curb Effect that improvements for one segment of the community could also have positive effects for those not directly targeted by those efforts, and in his estimation efforts centered on discrimination against the trans community was likely to have positive effects for the entire LGBTQ+ community. Secretary Thomasson advised members to ask people to get involved in public service, and not just for this board. It is important to have diverse voices on all of the Commonwealth's boards, not just the Advisory Boards centered on those communities.
- **Q: What is the process for the public or the Board to access state data?**  
**A:** Board members should go through the staff, who can direct requests for information appropriately. That way it is also possible for data that is available in the aggregate to the public to be filtered and formatted to be relevant to the

Board's specific questions. The Office of the Attorney General can also be a resource.

- **Q: How does the Virginia Department of Health vet organizations it recommends on its websites?**

**A:** VDH has a referral list for trans healthcare that is actively maintained by Ted Heck. Other resources, including resource lists on Advisory Board pages, are generally provided with a disclaimer that links are only for informational purposes and that it is not an exhaustive list of every possible resource.

- **Q: Would it be appropriate for the Board to work with the regulatory boards that oversee professions to potentially include cultural competency in continuing education requirements?**

**A:** While it would certainly be possible for the Board to invite members of professional boards to gain insight into their processes, generally competition to include certain things in continuing education requirements is stiff.

- Temporary Board Counsel Asst. Attorney General Justin Bell provided an overview with resources to understand state government and the Board's role in it.
  - There are three types of boards: advisory, policy, and supervisory. This is an advisory board, and our members are here to be "idea people." The actual implementation of those ideas will be taken up by the Executive Branch.
    - [Code of Virginia](#) - Review statutes establishing Board
    - [Commonwealth Calendar](#) - Shows all public meetings and events
    - [Regulatory Town Hall](#) - Shows all regulations under consideration
- Brainstorming Session—Creating Standing Committees
  - Deputy Secretary DeShazor led a brainstorming session on the issues the Board sees as the most pressing for the LGBTQ+ community with the aim of creating 3-5 standing committees to work on those issues.
  - The Board reviewed its charge, which is to advise on Economic, Professional, Cultural, Educational, and Governmental Issues (Va. Code § 2.2-2499.4). The Board also reviewed the standing committees of the other Advisory Boards.
  - The main themes that arose from the brainstorming were:
    - Health
    - Education
    - Public Safety
    - Housing
    - Visibility/Community Engagement
    - Transportation
    - Workforce/Business Development

- Safety was identified as an overarching concern that is foundational to improving conditions in all areas.
- **Q: What makes a good committee? Should committees align with VA Agencies?**  
**A:** Consider the Board's capacity and don't overreach lest Board members burn out. Don't worry about the government piece; the staff will make sure any requests or recommendations are appropriately directed. If the Board finds a committee is either too broad or too narrow, it is possible to change it, but it is best to not do so too often.
- **Q: Can committees be different sizes? Can committees have subcommittees?**  
**A:** It is possible to do so, but consider the difficulty in assembling a quorum for larger committees. Also remember that not every initiative needs a committee, since the Board itself is also capable of working on issues.
- Public Comment
  - No members of the public were in attendance.
- Next Steps
  - The Procedures for Virginia Advisory Board Executive Officer Elections were unanimously adopted.
  - A poll will be sent out to determine availability for the next meeting to be held in October/November.

5:21 p.m. Meeting adjourned

## Action Items

1. Submit biography and headshots for Board Website
2. Review Va. Code § 2.2-2499.1-4, [Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board](#), and § 2.2-3700 *et seq.*, [Virginia Freedom of Information Act](#)
3. Review notes from brainstorming session and consider appropriate standing committees
4. Submit nominations for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary
5. Send all email to [lgbtq@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:lgbtq@governor.virginia.gov)

## Next Meeting Agenda

Vote to establish standing committees and elect Board leadership. Date for next meeting TBD, tentatively Wednesday, November 10.

## Attendees

### Board Members:

- Matt Banfield (he/him)
- Michael Berlucchi (he/him)
- Demas Boudreaux (he/him)
- Evelyn BruMar (she/her)
- Charley Burton (he/him)
- Jonathan Dromgoole (he/him)
- Amanda Goehring (ze/hir)
- Kevin Han (he/him)
- Aurora Higgs (she/her or they/them)
- Rob Keeling (he/him)
- Joanna Keller (she/her)
- Kyle Mason (they/them)
- Stephanie Merlo (she/her)
- Tracy Monegain (she/her)
- Bryan Price (he/him)
- Jes Simmons (she/her)
- Patty Smith (she/her)
- Michael Thorne-Begland (he/him)
- Lisa Turner (she/her)

### By telephone:

- Karen Mullen McPhail (she/her)

### Ex-officio members:

- Kelly Thomasson (she/her), Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Daniel Carey (he/him), Secretary of Health & Human Resources
- Kristen Zagar (she/her), Deputy Commissioner of Human Services, Virginia Department of Social Services (*Designee of Secretary Carey*)

### Not in attendance:

- Monica Motley (she/her)

### Staff Members:

- Traci DeShazor (she/her), Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth and Director of African American Outreach
- Suzanne Holland (she/her), Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration and Director of Women's Outreach
- Justin Bell (he/him), Assistant Attorney General and temporary Board Counsel

**Guests:**

- Justin Lo (he/him), Member of the Virginia Asian American Advisory Board
- Rose Minor (she/her), Special Assistant for Community Outreach and Director of LGBTQ+ Outreach

**Motions**

<b>Motion to Approve Agenda, as Amended</b>		
<i>Moved: Demas Boudreaux</i>	<i>Seconded: Joanna Keller</i>	
Yeas: 20	Nays: 0	Abstentions: 0

<b>Motion to Adopt Procedures for Virginia Advisory Board Executive Officer Elections, as Amended</b>		
<i>Moved: Demas Boudreaux</i>	<i>Seconded: Joanna Keller</i>	
Yeas: 20	Nays: 0	Abstentions: 0

<b>Motion to Adjourn</b>		
<i>Moved: Evelyn BruMar</i>	<i>Seconded: Joanna Keller</i>	
Yeas: 20	Nays: 0	Abstentions: 0